

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 COME-00 DHA-02
SIL-01 LAB-04 /100 W
-----151710Z 041247 /42

R 151444Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5825
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJ: BLACK ATTITUDES - "COLORED" PERSPECTIVES

REF: CAPE TOWN 0054

1. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF A LONGER AIRGRAM IN THE "BLACK ATTITUDES" SERIES ON PERSPECTIVES FROM THE COLORED COMMUNITY.

2. SUMMARY: SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, SOUTH AFRICA'S
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"COLOREDS" ARE A PEOPLE "IN THE MIDDLE" - ENJOYING A STANDARD OF LIVING CONSIDERABLY LOWER THAN WHITES BUT NOTABLY HIGHER THAN BLACKS. ATTITUDES TOWARD BOTH WHITES AND BLACKS VARY BUT ARE BASICALLY AMBIVALENT. COLORED ATTITUDES, TOWARD BLACKS ARE IN PART A PRODUCT OF THEIR SELF-IMAGE WHICH HAS BEEN STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THEIR HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP TO WHITES. COLOREDS AS A

GROUP ARE A PRODUCT OF INTERMIXTURE OF INDIGENOUS BUSHMEN AND HOTTENTOTS WITH WHITE COLONISTS AND MALAY SLAVES - WITH LATER INFUSIONS FROM MANY OTHER ETHNIC SOURCES. HAVING ENJOYED FULL LEGAL AND VOTING RIGHTS FROM THE MID-1800S IN CAPE AND NATAL, COLOREDS CAME TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES "NEAR-WHITES" AND TOOK ON MANY OF SAME STEREOTYPED ATTITUDES OF WHITES TOWARDS BLACKS. THEIR PROGRESSIVE LOSS OF POLITICAL RIGHTS AFTER 1948, BITTERNESS TOWARDS THE "WHITE SYSTEM" WHICH REJECTED THEM, AND LOSS OF HOPE FOR EVENTUAL RESTORATION OF RIGHTS HAS MADE THEM INCREASINGLY PRONE TO IDENTIFY WITH BLACKS, AT LEAST POLITICALLY, AS COMMON VICTIMS OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM. THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE AMBIVALENCE IN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS BLACKS, SHARPENED IN TIME OF RECESSION BY COMPETITION FOR JOBS. WHETHER, AS ADVOCATED BY SOME WHITES, COLOREDS COULD BE "CO-OPTED" BY WHITES INTO COMMON POLITICAL STAND AGAINST BLACKS IS, FOR NOW, LARGELY ACADEMIC SINCE PRIME MINISTER HAS FIRMLY REJECTED ANY MOVE TOWARD "POWER-SHARING." COLOREDS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY POLITICIZED AND RADICALIZED SINCE LAST YEAR'S RIOTS AND IN ABSENCE OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT POLICY, EFFORTS TOWARD BLACK UNITY WILL LIKELY CONTINUE. GIVEN THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL CONCENTRATION IN CAPE TOWN, COLOREDS SEEM LIKELY TO PLAY A SMALL BUT NOT INSIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ANY FUTURE BLACK-WHITE CONFRONTATION. END SUMMARY.

3. COLOREDS ENJOY FULL LEGAL AND VOTING RIGHTS WITH WHITES IN CAPE AND NATAL FROM MID-1800S
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TO UNION IN 1910. THERE WAS SOME DILUTION OF RIGHTS IN THE 1930S. AFTER NP VICTORY IN 1948, COLOREDS WERE EXCLUDED FROM WHITE FRANCHISE AND SUBJECTED TO PANOPLY OF APARTHEID MEASURES EFFECTING HOUSING, EDUCATION, TRANSPORTATION AND MOST ASPECTS OF LIFE. OVER THE YEARS COLOREDS TENDED TO ADOPT VALUE SYSTEM OF DOMINANT WHITE CLASS, INCLUDING STEREOTYPED ATTITUDES OF WHITES TOWARD BLACKS. MANY COLOREDS CAME TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES "NEAR-WHITES" AND THEIR EXCLUSION AND "REJECTION" AFTER 1948 WAS AND CONTINUES TO BE A BITTER PILL FOR MANY.

4. EFFORT BY SAG TO OFFER ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION HAS NOT, TO DATE, BEEN SUCCESSFUL. THROUGH COLORED PERSONS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (CRC) AND PRIME MINISTER'S JOINT CABINET COUNCIL, SAG HAS IMPLIED THAT COLOREDS CAN EVENTUALLY HAVE AUTONOMY IN "COLORED AFFAIRS" AND "CONSULTATIVE" RIGHTS ON MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST. CRC AND BENEATH IT THE LOCAL MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE ARE ULTIMATELY DEPENDENT ON APPROVAL OF WHITE GOVERNMENTAL UNITS. MOST COLOREDS HAVE REACTED TO THESE INSTITUTIONS WITH APATHY OR OUTRIGHT REJECTION. AS RESULT, ONLY 25 PERCENT OF ELEGIBLE VOTERS PARTICIPATED IN LAST CRC ELECTION. COLORED INTELLECTUALS, PROFESSIONALS AND YOUTH ARE PARTICULARLY VEHEMENT IN THE REJECTION OF "COLORED" INSTITUTIONS.

5. OF TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES, MORE RADICAL LABOR PARTY ENJOYS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF THOSE COLOREDS WHO VOTE IN CRC ELECTIONS, WILLING 31 OF 40 SEATS IN LAST ELECTION. LABOR PARTY REJECTS CONCEPT OF "COLORENDESS," CALLS FOR ABOLITION OF ALL RACIALLY-BASED LEGISLATION, CREATION OF NON-RACIAL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR ALL - ONE MAN, ONE VOTE. OPPOSITION FEDERAL PARTY REPRESENTS SMALL CONSERVATIVE ELEMENT AMONG COLOREDS AND HISTORICALLY HAS BEEN REGARDED AS SUPPORTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF NP. ITS PAST ATTEMPTS TO WIN VOTES BY APPEALING TO FEAR OF "BLACK MASSES" HAVE GENERALLY BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. EVEN IT HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF CHANGE, WITH ITS LEADER RECENTLY SAYING PUBLICLY THAT COLOREDS ARE FED UP WITH "WHITE PATERNALISM."

6. LABOR PARTY DEFENDS ITS PARTICIPATION IN CRC AS EFFORT TO PREVENT IT BEING MONOPOLIZED BY SAG APOLOGISTS AND PROVIDING PLATFORM FOR CONFRONTATION WITH SAG. AS MAJORITY PARTY, HOWEVER, IT REFUSES TO SIGN COLORED BUDGET PREPARED BY SAG OR OTHERWISE CARRY OUT FUNCTIONS OF CRC SINCE THIS WOULD AMOUNT TO IMPLEMENTING APARTHEID. AS RESULT, LABOR PARTY HEAD SONNY LEON HAS BEEN SACKED AS HEAD OF CRC EXECUTIVE AND REPLACED BY COMPLIANT CIVIL SERVANT. BY SAME TOKEN, LABOR PARTY REFUSES PARTICIPATE IN PM'S CABINET COUNCIL, ARGUING IT IS MERELY "CONSULTATIVE" WHICH MEANS WHITES RETAIN ALL POWER. IT IS, THEY SAY, "MERE FIG LEAF TO COVER APARTHEID'S SHAMFULNESS." FEDERAL PARTY CRITICIZES LABOR FOR FAILING TO MAKE USE OF CRC AND CABINET COUNCIL TO GET "BEST DEAL POSSIBLE" FOR COLOREDS AND HAS ACCEPTED PM'S INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN CABINET COUNCIL IN LIEU OF LABOR PARTY. THEIR INFLUENCE IN COLORED COMMUNITY, HOWEVER, IS SLIGHT. WILLIAMS

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7. A SAG-APPOINTED COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO COLORED AFFAIRS, HEADED BY NP MEMBER AND STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR ERIKA THERON, CELIVERED REPORT LAST YEAR AFTER THREE YEARS OF DELIBERATION WHICH IN EFFECT DOCUMENTED FAILURES OF APARTHEID POLICIES TOWARD COLOREDS, CALLED FOR SCRAPPING SUCH LEGISLATION AS MIXED MARRIAGES AND IMMORALITY ACT AND CALLED FOR COMMITTEE OF EXPERS TO MAKE DETAILED PROPOSALS FOR DIRECT COLORED POLITICAL REPRESENTATION. SAG REJECTION OF ITS MAJOR PROPOSALS AFTER ONE DAY DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT INCREASED FEELINGS
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OF FRUSTRATION AND BITTERNESS AND WAS CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE ONE OF FACTORS LEADING TO PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS BY UWC STUDENTS AND EXTENSIVE RIOTING IN COLORED TOWNSHIPS LAST YEAR.

8. TRADITIONAL STEREOTYPED ATTITUDES OF COLOREDS

TOWARD BLACKS AND FEARS THAT ONE MAN, ONE VOTE WOULD LEAD TO SUBMERGENCE OF COLOREDS AMONG BLACK MASSES ARE INCREASINGLY BEING REPLACED, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE YOUNG AND THE BETTER-EDUCATED, BY BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AND APPEALS TO BLACK UNITY. GROWTH OF ANTI-WHITE, AND THEREFORE TO SOME EXTENT PRO-BLACK, ATTITUDES AMONG EDUCATED COLORED YOUTH IS PARTICULARLY PRONOUNCED. LAST YEAR'S RIOTS, AND PERCEIVED POLICE EXCESSES IN DEALING WITH THEM, CAUSED MUCH BITTERNESS AND ADVANCED THE PROCESS OF POLITICIZATION AND RADICALIZATION OF COLOREDS. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT COLORED FEARS AND RESENTMENTS OF BLACKS NO LONGER EXIST. GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT AND COMPETITION FOR JOBS HAS LED TWO PREDOMINANTLY COLORED UNIONS WITHIN PAST YEAR TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE COUNTRY'S SOLE MULTI-RACIAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION BECAUSE OF ITS OPPOSITION TO JOB RESERVATION WHICH PROTECTS COLORED AS WELL AS WHITE JOBS FROM BLACKS.

9. SOME WHITES, INCLUDING SOME AFRIKANERS, ARGUE THAT COLOREDS AND INDIANS SHOULD BE GRANTED POLITICAL RIGHTS IN A COMMON SYSTEM WHICH WOULD STAND AS BULWARK AGAINST BLACKS. SEVEN PLUS MILLION WHITES, COLOREDS AND INDIANS WOULD THEN FACE 18 MILLION BLACKS BUT ONLY 11 MILLION OF WHO ARE OUTSIDE "HOMELANDS" AND OF THOSE ONLY 5-6 MILLION IN URBAN AREAS. TEMPTING AS THIS MIGHT SEEM, IT HAS BEEN FIRMLY REJECTED BY NP PRIMARILY BECAUSE IT CAN SEE NO WAY OF DOING SO THAT WOULD NOT RESULT IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING WHITES AND COLOREDS COMBINING TO OVERTHROW AFRIKANER (NP) RULE. THUS, DESPITE DIVISIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITHIN COLORED COMMUNITY AND AMBIVALENCE OF ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACKS, MOST LIKELY PROSPECT IS THAT TREND TOWARD BLACK UNITY WILL FIND INCREASING ACCEPTANCE AMONG COLOREDS. COLORED YOUTH WILL, PROBABLY WITH MANY SETBACKS AND PERIODS OF APPARENT QUIESCENCE, CONTINUE TO BE IN VANGUARD OF PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN THE CAPE. THERE WILL BE INCREASING PRESSURE FOR COLORED LABOR MOVEMENT TO TAKE MORE ACTIVIST ROLE. IN ABSENCE OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN SAG POLICIES COLOREDS ARE LIKELY TO PLAY SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT ROLE ON SIDE OF BLACKS IN ANY BLACK-WHITE CONFRONTATION. WILLIAMS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAPET00380
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770088-1089
Format: TEL
From: CAPE TOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770360/aaaacaga.tel
Line Count: 271
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 013bf8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 CAPE TOWN 54
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3110849
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BLACK ATTITUDES - \"COLORED\" PERSPECTIVES
TAGS: PINT, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/013bf8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009